

# WIPOLOOK

MAY 1998

LITTLE PEOPLE?



# LITTLE PEOPLE?

*How much do we really matter in the grand scheme of things?*

**P**aul the Apostle states: “They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12). In other words, human standards of measurement are way off. The cosmic view of our world helps to realign our thinking, as David noted when he viewed heaven’s lighthouses on the shoreless seas of interstellar space: “When I consider Thy heavens...what is man?” (Ps. 8:3-4).

At the recent Olympics in Nagano, Japan, gold medals, the world’s applause, and million-dollar endorsement contracts went to those who defeated their competition by thousandths of a second. One would not minimize the dedication, skill, and daring of skaters who jump several feet into the air and spin several times while doing it. But it ought to be remembered that the feat was accomplished on a planet which our Lord keeps spinning on its axis at about 1,000 miles per hour. Earth is also travelling around the sun at 66,600 miles per hour, covering 595 million miles around the sun in one year.



But our whole solar system is also hurtling through space. The Milky Way, the flotilla of stars in which we travel, is itself spinning around its center at 558,000 mph. (Even so, it is estimated that it would take our sun about 250 million years to make one circuit.)

Enough to give you a severe case of vertigo! But it doesn’t, of course. People who can’t stand the movement of a boat gently rocking at quayside, fall fast asleep on a bed that is rotating, spinning, and hurtling through space at breakneck speed.

It should be a little humbling at least that, from a hundred miles out in space (a mere baby step), you could not tell the difference between a world-class skier making a record-breaking jump off a mountainside and a flea jumping onto your pet’s fur (a 1/8 in. flea is able to jump 13 in., the equivalent of a 6 ft. man jumping 624 ft. from a standing start!).

Yet for all this, the infinite God takes us very seriously, far more seriously than we take ourselves and others.

He did, as David says, visit us. He was made of a woman, partook of flesh and blood, was made like His brethren! He not only came into our Lilliputian world, He came into humanity itself. But more, He lived in poverty, worked in a lowly trade, then lived the life of the homeless (with nowhere to lay His head), and allowed Himself to be belittled by these little creatures of His so that they “esteemed Him as being nothing.”

That, however, is not the end of the story. Instead of blasting the whole planet to a cinder, the Great One by way of the cross has “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12-13). So the next time you are tempted to belittle one of His little ones, remember who they really are:

1. The recipients of divine life at the incalculable cost of the death of the Son of God, the greatest price ever paid for anything (Jn. 3:16-17).

2. Members of the royal family of heaven, the future administrators of the universe (1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 22:5).

3. The repositories of every spiritual blessing that heaven can boast (Eph. 1:3).

4. Engaged to the most wonderful Man in the universe, to be the object of His loving attentions forever (Rev. 19:7). Over this story, and this alone, it can be written: “And they lived happily ever after.”

5. The object lessons that God uses to teach the unseen spirit world that He really does know what He is doing (Eph. 3:10).

6. The inheritors of the kingdom. “Fear not, little flock;” said the Good Shepherd, “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give *you* the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32).

7. Confidants of heaven (Eph. 1:9), friends of the God of the Ages, with unlimited access to His throne room.

Little people in the family of God? Not in His eyes! Dare I quote these words? The least of His saints are included in that number who are “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:23). ▶

by J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

# UPLOOK

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# Little is much when God is in it

*Look what's happening!*

*We believe the Lord is at work.*

*Remember the dates: JUNE 7-12!*

The phone call from Oregon gave the happy news: 10,000 Gospels of John were being donated to be distributed in Little Rock! We praise the One who gives seed to the sowers (2 Cor. 9:10).

On a recent trip to ready their house in LR (with the aid of some of the brethren from Tulsa), John made excellent contacts with some of his neighbors. All were curious to learn what he was doing there. Some had already heard he was a "preacher."

One of them actually said, "We've been asking the Lord to send someone like you into this neighborhood!" Time will tell what lies in store, but we cannot help but think of the words of Paul: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9).

How grateful we are that there is a far greater Advocate than our adversaries. And no doubt the "effectual" opening of the gospel is linked to the "effectual, fervent prayer" of saints. We know many of you are praying. If you would like to receive regular updates for specific prayer and have

access to email, just type the word: subscribe in the body of an email message, and address it to:

[uplooklist-request@gospelcom.net](mailto:uplooklist-request@gospelcom.net)

## HERE ARE THE FACTS

- **WHEN?** Participants should plan to arrive on the afternoon of June 7 and anticipate leaving after breakfast on the morning of June 13. A few workers are needed the week before (June 1-6) for the distribution of posters throughout the city and invitations to homes in the area of the outreach (especially Saturday, June 6).
- **WHO?** Both men and women 18 years and above, are invited—those exercised to spread the gospel in this needy state capital. It is expected that you will be in good standing in your local assembly and able to provide a letter from your elders with their approval of your participation.

As well as the team members, we would be happy to see other believers attend the meetings in LR. We have already heard of some who are bringing trailers or motorhomes to the area, or renting hotel rooms in LR (at present, we can provide a special rate at the Hilton where the team is staying and where the evening meetings will be held. We would appreciate knowing if you are coming as atten-

dees to the meetings. This will help in planning meeting room space.

• **HOW MUCH?** Participants may send a US\$25 deposit with name, address, and phone number to reserve a place as a worker. However the full amount must be mailed not later than *May 7* to:

**Little Rock Outreach**  
P. O. Box 2041,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Costs are: US\$175 per person for four to a room, US\$205 per person for three to a room, US\$285 per person for two to a room, and \$US495 for one to a room.

This fee includes 6 nights at the Little Rock Hilton (Sun. thru Fri.—more nights can be arranged), plus six full buffet breakfasts, and 5 bag lunches. Tips and taxes included.

Not included is the evening meal each night when it is intended that we will utilize the dinner hour at local restaurants to invite others to the evening meetings.

Other costs—literature, advertising, public meeting room, etc.—are being met by gifts from the Lord's people for which we are grateful.

Some of those expected to help in the gospel work are Joe Reese (ON), Bob Brown (LA), Boyd Nicholson (ON), Hurley Dixon (MO), John Bjorlie (MI), Grady Dollar (TX), and Mike Thomas (NY). Others are hoping to join us as well.

Our prayer is this: *May the Lord be glorified, souls saved, and saints blessed.*



**GOOD NEWS**  
*Little Rock*

Fellowship for the Little Rock Outreach may be sent to:  
East Tulsa Bible Chapel  
P. O. Box 691854  
Tulsa, OK 74169-1854  
Checks should be payable to  
Little Rock Outreach

# Aunt Elsie and the Gederite

*“Over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash” (1 Chron. 27:28).*

**J. BOYD NICHOLSON**

She was a real caricature! Any artist would have delighted to pull out a pencil and sketch her. Little and old—well, she was in her 80’s—rather a long nose and a somewhat pointed chin.

She wore an old, oatmeal gray overcoat, sometimes buttoned in the right holes and sometimes not. On her head was a black felt hat, pressed at a different angle each night. But she had the most electric blue eyes, with a sparkle that indicated behind the old frame and beneath the fading locks was a very active mind.

It was the dead of a Canadian winter and a series of gospel meetings was being held nightly. She lived alone, so we picked her up in the car and took her along to the meetings. She didn’t miss one night in five weeks. Night by night after the meeting, the old soldier would greet the preacher at the door with a rather succinct assessment of the message.

“Well,” she might say one night, “You had a hard time preaching up there tonight, didn’t you?” Indeed, it was one of those nights when there seemed to be no liberty at all to preach, fumbling through the message, forgetting, misquoting—a distressing thing for a preacher.

“Yes, Aunt Elsie, I was really struggling tonight.”

The old lady would nod. “Well, I’m praying for you.”

“Thank you, sister, I need it.”

On another night, it would be different, the strong handshake at the



door and the “appraisal.”

“Well, God gave help in preaching the old gospel tonight, brother.”

“Yes, thank the Lord, there was help and liberty in the message tonight,” the preacher would respond.

Fastening those eyes on him, she’d reply, “I’m praying for you.” It was not clear whether that was to be a prayer for blessing or for humbling, lest the preacher begin to glory in himself or his preaching.

Then one night, a terrifying thing for a preacher took place. Sitting at the front, just about to climb the platform to speak, the preacher was going over in his mind the message he had prepared. The last hymn before he should rise was coming to a close, when suddenly it was as though the Lord spoke in his heart and said, “That is not the message for tonight.”

What a shock! In a minute he would have to get up and preach. Crying in his heart to the Lord for help, suddenly, and very forcibly, there came to mind an obscure Old Testament scripture. The Lord helped the preacher quickly locate the passage, the hymn ended, and, with his

finger in the text, the preacher climbed onto the platform, opened the Bible, and with trembling began to preach the gospel from that obscure text. God blessed the message in a wonderful way and souls professed faith in Christ that night.

The preacher stood at the door greeting the people as they filed out, but he was looking for the little black hat making its way down the aisle. What was the saintly old prayer warrior going to say to him tonight?

At last there she is. She took hold of the preacher’s hand, held on to it and fastened those twinkling eyes on him for a long minute, “Well, I prayed for you today—that you would preach from that very text tonight”!

It is doubtful if anyone ever went to that old soul, and thanked her for praying for the needy preacher, but if there are to be rewards for the work accomplished in those meetings, where do you think they will go? To the man on the pulpit or the old prayer warrior doing business for God and the souls of men in the sanctuary, wrestling in heavenly places to pull down the anointing of God on the public testimony?

Do you remember Baal-hanan the Gederite? Or Joash of the oil cellars? Not likely. Few ever remember them. Why not? Because as far as we can tell, those men never took part in any of the public service of God. They were commissioned by the king to ensure that there would always be an adequate inventory of oil for the anointing of the holy vessels.

Baal-hanan labored in “the low plains” and Joash in “the cellars.”


They were men out of sight, but whose hidden ministry was absolutely essential for all the service of the sanctuary. Indeed, if their ministry was lacking, there would be no public service at all.

How we have learned to thank God for the saints of the sanctuary; those who wrestle, and labor to pull

down the holy anointing of God on the public ministry. Without this, all our preaching would be but a superfluity of words, falling to the ground at our feet.

Those men of the oil were unknown, unseen, unheralded, but the king knew they were there. He had commissioned them and he would

reward them.


Well, Aunt Elsie was little known, laboring in “the low plains” and in “the cellars”—on earth that is—for she was well known in the sanctuary. The Lord knew she was there. He had commissioned her and He will reward her. Thank God for the servants of the sanctuary. 



## WHAT WILL IT MATTER?



What will it matter  
In a little while  
That for a day we met  
And gave a word,  
A touch, a smile  
Upon the way?  
What will it matter  
Whether hearts were brave,  
And lives were true;  
That you gave me  
The comfort that I craved,  
As I gave you?

These trifles—can it be  
That they can make  
Or mar a human life?  
Are souls as lightly stirred  
As rushes are  
By storm or strife?  
Yes! Yes! A look  
The falling heart may break,  
Or make it whole;  
And just a word  
For love's sweet sake  
May save a soul. —*Author Unknown* 

# The civic gospel?

*Have American evangelicals lost their confidence in the Bible gospel to change lives—and society?*

D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridges Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, FL, is best known as the originator of the “Evangelism Explosion” method for reaching communities with the gospel. But today he is raising another flag.

Quoted in an Associated Press release, Kennedy says, “There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come, and the idea of reclaiming America for Christ has definitely come.”

A week-long conference at his church recently drew 1,400 activists who pledged allegiance not only to the Christian flag and to the Bible, but also to the American flag. For many evangelicals, political activity is a mandate. Not surprisingly, the conference was called Reclaiming America for Christ.

The four assumptions are: that America once belonged to Christ, it has been stolen from Him, He wants it back, and it is our job to do it by political action.

“You might say the hot new idea is the civic gospel,” John Green, a political scientist at the University of Akron in Ohio is quoted as saying.

“Christians have a special responsibility to create a civil order that nurtures moral lives.”

In early February, at a Council for National Policy conference in Phoenix, James Dobson (host of the five-million-listener *Focus on the Family*) sent a warning shot across the bow of the Republican party when he asked, “What good is it to have power if you don’t use it for good?” He then warned Republicans that they must take the religious right seriously or see him jump ship—and that he would endeavor to convince his listeners to follow suit.

David Briggs, an AP reporter observes: “Actually the idea [of a civic gospel] is a conservative twist on an older tradition. At the turn of this century, liberal evangelicals, shocked by the excesses of capitalism, gave rise to the ‘social gospel’ movement, shifting religious focus from the church to the streets, establishing a tradition for the civil rights struggle.”

The social “gospel” did more than that. In an attempt to make a broader sweep through society, the movement exchanged the power of the gospel

Charles Rex Arbogast



DR. JAMES DOBSON

for popularity and politics. They succeeded. Christian activism has never been more popular—nor more important—than it is today. It has been observed that in Jesus’ day the leaders hated Him and the common people

heard Him gladly. Today politicians court the favor of the Religious Right, but the common people think of evangelicals as hate-mongers and bigots. The preacher’s pulpit has been exchanged for the political platform and the heavenly calling has been lost in seeking worldly clout.

If Christ once ruled over America via the constitution of the United States, were the believers then pilgrims or citizens in the earth? And if Kennedy, Dobson and their followers could succeed in reclaiming America for Christ, would we have traded being strangers for being citizens?

God Himself has blocked the way back into the garden of Eden. It was never His intention for us to reclaim an earthly paradise. We now are on a pilgrimage to a new city, whose builder and maker is God. Strange as it may be to some Christians, the Lord wants to save Democrats as much as He wants Republicans, and when we embrace a “civic gospel,” we lose our ambassadorial status. 📌

## STOP, LOOK & LISTEN

On Tuesday, April 7, a full page ad appeared in *USA Today*. Focus on the Family and Family Research Council pleaded with Americans to stop and consider what our recent news says about the society we have become.

“We should have known,” the advertisement states, “that children who have watched thousands of murders on prime-time television, fol-

lowed the exploits of Dr. Kevorkian, and been taught that there are no moral absolutes might come to see little harm in gunning down their classmates.

The article continued, “Radical individualism is destroying us! The creed that says, ‘if it feels good, do it!’ has filled too many hospitals with drug over-dosed teenagers, too many prison cells with fatherless youth, too

many caskets with slain young people, and too many eyes with tears.”

Pray that this nation-wide ad might be used to wake readers up to the need of the Lord, not only in the nation, but in our individual lives.

## MORE HEARTBREAK

New Tribes Mission has suffered another devastating tragedy. On Monday, March 23, five people were

killed in a plane crash in southern Venezuela. Please pray for the families and friends of those who were killed: 45-year-old Rick Burd, 15-year-old Tim Stucky, 60-year-old Bud McCormick and his wife, 56-year-old Ida, and Venezuelan Freda Lopez.

Also remember the students and staff at the Mission's school at Tama Tama who suffer an enormous loss.

### ANTI-MISSIONARY BILL

*Uplook* had previously reported the proposal of a bill in Israel which would demand a one-year sentence for "unlawfully holding, printing, copying, spreading, distributing, or importing material which has an element of proselytizing. We believe that the covenant which God concluded with the people of Israel was never revoked. We deeply respect the Jewish people in their identity and integrity and will therefore not engage in activities which have as their intention to alienate them from their tradition and community."

We just received this communication from an Israeli believer: "Some 'Christian' organizations and liberal groups met with [Israeli Knesset member Nissim] Zvilli [author of the bill] just to give him a way to withdraw from the bill. These 'Christian' groups represent (as much as I know) not even one evangelical Israeli assembly! NO evangelism deal is on our agenda! We will be in jail but never sign a deal like that!...God bless you." [Name withheld]

### SHAKY GROUND?

The former site of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem is currently the location of the Muslim Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque. Those interested in prophetic events often speculate how the Dome of the Rock will be destroyed so that the temple can be reconstructed there.

Shimon Gibson, an archaeologist with the Palestine Exploration Fund,

says that the network of 49 cisterns under the 11-acre platform has been neglected for decades, resulting in cracks in the walls. Gibson has suggested that as water settles into cracks and deteriorates the limestone, a disaster may be pending. He has predicted that a collapse might occur during the Muslim season of Ramadan, when thousands of worshippers will congregate on the shaky platform. —*Christianity Today*

### VIRTUAL PROPERTY LINES

As the Internet storms into our lives, it is inevitable that a whole new set of problems arrive with it. Jews For Jesus ministry encountered such a problem when Outreach Judaism, a group that tries to win Jewish Christians away from their Messiah, set up a page on the World Wide Web under the name *jewsforjesus.org*. The genuine Christian organization has an address almost identical: *jews-for-jesus.org*. If web surfers came on the dummy site unawares, they received a very different message than the one proclaimed by Jews For Jesus.

Since internet trademarks are so loosely controlled, it was difficult to press charges. The Christian ministry used intellectual property law to meet the culprit in court. A preliminary injunction was granted against Stephen Brodsky and the address *jewsforjesus.org* now bears the message: "no website found at this location at this time." —*World*

### SOLD! TO THE LAND OF STARS AND STRIPES

What kind of non-fiction are the people of the United States reading these days? As of the second week of April, James Van Praagh's book "Talking to Heaven" was on the *New York Times*' bestseller list for fourteen weeks—holding first place for much of that time.

Most of the book is devoted to explaining Mr. Van Praagh's mysteri-

ous psychic gifts; the remainder tells readers how to develop their own skills in necromancy. *World* magazine says that the book is "peddled as a happy, religious, spiritual book—talking to heaven instead of talking to hell—is...chilling, a sign of the public's dangerous spiritual naivité." It is good to be reminded of Leviticus 20:6, "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."

### HINDU RITUAL IN MALASIA

Hundreds of thousands of Hindus converged on Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia recently for the annual ritual known as Thipusam. With fish hooks in their backs and spears piercing their cheeks, the penitents gathered to worship their deity, Lord Muruga. Many of the devotees were in trances. One of the temple priests stated, "It is all faith and belief in God." Similar spectacles take place among ethnic Indians in other Malaysian cities. The worshippers in Malaysia are descended from 19th century Indian immigrants who arrived in the country to work on rubber plantations and in government jobs. The festival is against the law in India. —*Pulse*

### RELIEF RE RUSSIAN LAW?

According to Law and Liberty Trust, Boris Yeltsin has ordered the Ministry of Justice to instruct local authorities to ignore the 15-year rule on religious organizations in the country. According to *Religion Today*, the ministry will issue regulations ordering local authorities to apply the most lenient standard when enforcing the law. Domestic policy advisor Andrey Loginov stated, "If there is a conflict between the law and the Constitution, the Constitution will apply." ⓘ





# Little but wise

*God gives us big lessons from little ants, conies, locusts, and poisonous spiders or lizards.*

AUGUST VAN RYN

Each of the four creatures mentioned in Proverbs 30:24-28 presents the believer in a different light, shadowing another view of his earthly path—the path of faith, conflict, and conquest. We get some very practical lessons here for everyday Christian living.

Notice in the opening verse that stress is laid on the feebleness of these creatures. They are all “little” on the earth. And nothing, of course, is more important to a saint of God than to realize one’s littleness, and to walk in the consciousness of this. God can only use those who understand their dependence on Him.

Therefore we read that those four things, while little, are exceeding wise. Littleness of self and divine wisdom imparted by God are a happy combination. The first step to being “exceeding wise” is to acknowledge one’s littleness before Him: “Except ye repent and become as *little* children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

## THE ANT



*“The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.”*

*The ants are not strong.* The word “strong” means fierce. In Proverbs 18:23, it is translated “roughly,” where we read that “the poor useth entreaties, but the rich answereth roughly.” The thought seems to be the fierceness or rudeness that a sense of

superior strength imparts. But these ants are not fierce, and they picture the people of God who are little, but wise. The Christians do not depend on their own strength, but on God. Fierceness and arrogance often characterize men of the world.

In contrast, the believer is not fierce, for he is a follower of the lowly Jesus—considerate of others, esteeming others better than himself, seeking not his own.

*The ants are gathering;* so are the people of God. But believers, unlike the ants, are not gathering food only to feed themselves, but that they might have something to give to others, and some trophies to lay at His feet in that day.

Only here and in Proverbs 6:6-8 do we have reference to the ants in Scripture. In Proverbs 6, we are told that the ants have no guide, overseer or ruler, yet they provide their food in the summer and gather it in harvest.

*An ant is not a sluggard,* but is always busy. This is one of the important lessons we are to glean when considering the ant. We are exhorted in the Word times without number to be engaged in service for Him, to occupy till He come, to redeem the time because the days are evil. All of us have been impressed by the incessant toil of our Lord. “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.” We, too, should be up and doing.

Notice in Proverbs 6 that *the ant has no guide,* overseer, or ruler. No one around to watch him—or rather I should say “her”—for Proverbs 6 bids us to consider “her” ways and be

wise. It seems that among the ants the females do most of the work, and so often among Christians also the sisters are much more ready to serve than brothers are. Shame on the men—go, thou sluggard, consider the ways of the ant and become wise.

No, there is no overseer to see to it that the ants keep going. They have within them an invisible but powerful urge which keeps them busy, without having to be driven or prodded. The ant does not need any exhortation to be faithful.

When I was about seventeen, I was apprenticed as a clerk in a busy office. I did not like office work, and went daily to the job against my will. Time and again the boss would find me, as he came unexpectedly into the office, looking wistfully out of the window at the bright outdoors.

One day, catching me day-dreaming, he said angrily: “Why is it that I catch you so often doing nothing?” Trying to be smart, I answered: “I guess it’s because you wear those rubber-soled shoes.” That was it. I only worked when the overseer was around.

Are we serving Him faithfully, or fitfully? We are not to serve as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing His will from the heart.

Instinct urges ants forward. Have we any propelling force that drives us onward in this path of faith? The Lord could command us to serve, and it would be only right, for He bought us with His blood, but He beseeches us. He delights in willing, loving service.

We have the indwelling Holy Spirit as our guide, and the unseen Christ in glory as our Lord and Master. What more do we need?

*The ants prepare their food in the summer.* Yes, another reason the ants keep busy is because it has been implanted in them to know instinc-





tively that now is the time for work. Soon winter with its death will be on them, and then the time for ingathering will be over.

Brethren, the time is short. This is the only time I can in service show my gratitude to the Lord Jesus; it is now that I can be used by Him for the blessing of precious souls. Let us not waste the precious moments in mere selfish living, heaping up earthly treasures for the rubbish heap. "Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that which endures unto everlasting life." All else is just so much vanity.

When it says the ants "prepare," it does not mean, of course, that they make it grow—merely that they gather it. It is so with us; we do not make things grow. God gives the increase; we only gather the blessings.

It is interesting that the Hebrew word for summer and summer fruit is the same. It suggests that fruit cannot be divorced from summer. And is it not so? Labor for the Lord down here cannot be divorced from fruit: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).



### THE CONEY

*"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks."*

In the ants we saw that the believer is not fierce or aggressive. He is not in this world to force his way, or to attack the weaker. He is not here, as believers often erroneously think, to fight the world and its wickedness, or to seek to make the world a better place to live in. He is here to live for Christ and to bring souls to a saving knowledge of his Lord. He is here to gather fruit for eternity.

The coney shows that while a Christian is not to attack others, yet he will be attacked. *The conies are a feeble folk.* The word feeble means "not mighty or strong." They are not in a position to meet the attack of the enemy. Yet they will be attacked, as Christians always are, by foes within and without. The apostle Peter speaks of "fleshly lusts which war against the soul." What is the believer to do in case of assault? Ah, like the coney, he is to flee to his house in the rock. God has provided a place of refuge for His people in their weakness.

Many believers have the mistaken idea that they should fight sin in themselves and in others, but Scripture does not speak thus. No, the Christian is

told to flee in the hour of attack. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, etc" (1 Tim. 6:11). "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). In 1 Timothy 6, we are exhorted to flee the world; the things mentioned are those which mark the world—strife, discontent, and love of money. In 2 Timothy 2, we flee the flesh. The one is without, the other within. Flee where? To the Rock!

The Hebrew word for "rock" into which the conies were to flee is the same word for the "rock" which Moses smote. It signifies an elevated rock, a lofty rock, and speaks unquestionably of Christ our exalted Lord in the heavens. He is the believer's refuge (Heb. 6:18) to which we are to flee.

The risen Christ in glory is our refuge and strength; a very present help in time of trouble. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). No foe can touch the coney when safely sheltered in the rock. I am not able to resist the subtle temptations of the world about me or the flesh within me, but He lives to save me to the uttermost.

Yet there *is* a battle to be waged by the believer. He is not always to flee. I believe we have it suggested in the third creature mentioned.



### THE LOCUST

*"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."*

The locusts are not a fleeing people, like the conies, but a *marching host*, pressing on in close formation, doing their work. They have, to all outward appearances, no king, yet there is an evident method in their advance. Even so the people of God have no *visible* leader. Our great Leader is invisible to human eye, yet nonetheless real.

It is a matter that calls for deepest thankfulness that our Lord has provided fully for the spiritual needs of His Church. He has given gifts to His Church—evangelists, pastors, and teachers—and those who seek to guide the saints as well as to feed them. But all such leaders, if true to God, make the Word of God their sole authority for service. They do not assume authority which God does not confer upon them. Christ alone is the Head of His Church, and no human being has any right or authority whatsoever to assume a place of domination over God's people.

Even among Christians who ought to know better, we find often a good deal of this looking to man rather than to Christ. There is always danger of getting a mere man, no matter how godly or capable he might





be, between one's soul and God. These locusts imply that the people of the Lord are moving forward in the Christian life in direct response to orders from the Lord Jesus, and under the virile leadership of the Holy Spirit. And for successful living, there is required a conscious, daily subjection to the Lord.

*These locusts are on the warpath*, and so are the saints of God. No fleeing here, as with the conies. We should flee from the world and the flesh, but never from the devil. No, we are to fight the good fight of faith. And victory is assured. "The gates of hell shall not prevail" against the Church.

Ephesians 6 is a commentary on these locusts. There is no visible leader, but the church marches on, in conflict with Satan, under the invincible generalship of the Lord. Clothed in the whole armor of God, the believer presses forward, attacking Satan and all his hosts. We are never told to flee from the devil, but to resist him, and he will flee from us. There is no turning back, no defeat.

*They go forth, all of them by bands.* Little companies of Christians all over the earth, united to Christ and to each other by bonds of love and ties of blood, press on in the fight, gradually driving back the evil hosts of darkness. The infidel loves to sneer at the Bible and to ridicule Christians for their failures and follies. Some cause indeed there is for these taunts, but in spite of all, Satan has had to retreat—always retreat—before the mighty hosts of God advancing under the command of Christ.

Millions have been snatched from Satan's grasp, out of the realms of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. That's our real business down here. Fleeing from the flesh and the attractions of the world, we are to wage this deadly warfare in seeking to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. We are to do so, not as lone rangers, but warring together with all God's saints, as a mighty army. We are to go forth, like the locusts, by bands. We are always more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

## THE SPIDER

*"The spider...taketh hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces."*

Even here on earth, the believer may thus be at home in the palace of the King. We shall be in His

glorious presence forever, praise His holy Name. But even now, while only little things on the earth, we may make ourselves at home where He dwells.


The word for spider is said to indicate a "poisonous lizard." That crawling, contemptible creature, whose home is in the dust of the earth, is now in the king's palace. It is truly a strong contrast. When we think of ourselves, once creatures of the dust, with the poison of asps under our lips (Rom. 3:13; Jas. 3:8), we wonder as we find ourselves brought into the very presence of the Lord of glory.

*What business has a lizard, a poisonous lizard, in a king's palace?* None at all. No more than I have in the presence of God my Saviour. But divine grace has given me a place there! Divine grace gave Christ to die for me, and has made me accepted in the Beloved; has made His home my home, too.

*And, like the lizard, I have taken hold with my hands.* The hands of faith have taken hold on the tremendous revelation of His love to me—a poor sinner—and thus I have been lifted, like the lizard, out of the dust into the very palace of the King. That place which grace has provided is now my very own. I am not waiting till He comes to be brought into the ivory palaces, but by faith I dwell there already. With both hands I grasp by faith now that wondrous place of blessing as mine.

The same Hebrew word for "palace" is also employed for "temple." I worship even now in His temple. In fact, I am *part* of His temple, that spiritual building erected in this dispensation of grace; erected for His eternal abode, to ring eternally with the praises of the Lamb that was slain.

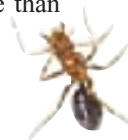
And so the spider suggests the believer as he even now appropriates his portion in Christ; as he even today finds himself enjoying the glories of His eternal home; as he right now lives in the presence of the Lord. In His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Dear fellow believer, it will be only a little while, and He shall come. Then we shall be forever with the Lord, then to know to the full the wonderful, matchless depth of His love and to see Him, to praise, wonder and adore, as endless ages roll on their course. In view of this, let us heed the lessons presented in this chapter. Let us follow Him, who left us an example that we might be, even now, a little like Him. 

A LITTLE THING  
IS A LITTLE THING  
BUT  
FAITHFULNESS  
IN A LITTLE THING  
IS A BIG THING.



HUDSON TAYLOR



**OLNEY MINISTRY**

The annual conference will be held in the Olney Gospel Hall (314 West Chew St., Philadelphia, PA) on May 23 and 24, preceded by a prayer meeting at 7:45 on the 22nd.

Conference meetings are scheduled for 2:30 and 7:00 both days with speakers John Adams (AB), Harold Smith (NS) and Wade LeBlanc (NB). For more information, please contact:  
Harry Wiegand  
321 Asbury Ave.  
Melrose Park, PA 19027  
(215) 635-0822

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The annual conference of Bethany Gospel Chapel (Worcester, MA) is planned for May 22-24 with guest speakers Liddon Sheridan (AL) and Jim Paul (ON). Meetings will be held on Friday at 7:30; Saturday at 2:30 and 6:30; Sunday at 10:30 (for Remembrance), 2:30 and 6:00.

**MEMORIAL WEEKEND**

Meadow Ridge Bible Chapel (West Fargo, ND) will hold their 1998 Memorial Weekend conference on May 22-25 with Colin Anderson (ON) and Elliot Van Ryn (FL) as speakers. Contact Myron Martinson at (218) 233-9790.

**TEACH & TESTIFY 1998**

Ron Hampton (MB) is organizing teams for Ireland this summer to encourage Irish assemblies. The dates are May 25-June 18. There will be a three-day orientation, followed by 17 days in ministry and evangelism, with each team hosted by a different Irish assembly. The time will finish with three days of sight-seeing. Contact Ron at:

614 Greene Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB R2K 0M6  
Phone/fax: (204) 669-1694  
rhampton@mb.sympatico.ca

**SKYLAND CONFERENCE**

The 42nd Annual Skyland Bible Conference will be held at Covington College atop Lookout Mountain, Georgia (near Chattanooga, TN) July 4-10. Speakers: Tom Taylor and Alan Parks. Skyland is a family conference with programs for all ages—nursery, children ages 5-10, teens, and adults. For a brochure with further info:

John and Tina Taylor  
P. O. Box 754  
Jamestown, NC 27282  
(336) 454-4927

**FELLOWSHIP FAMILY CAMP**

This camp provides an opportunity for families to share with other believers in a time of daily Bible teaching, fellowship, and recreation in the spectacular Rocky Mountains. The location is Covenant Heights Conference Center, seven miles south of Estes Park on Highway #7, just east of beautiful Long's Peak.

There are private rooms for families. There is also a campground for those who prefer to use a tent or camper. The dates are: Aug. 2, 3:00 PM to August 6, 3:00 PM. Make reservations early. For more info.:

Donald Norbie  
2605 14th Ave. Court  
Greeley, CO 80631  
dlnorbie@juno.com

**DISCIPLESHIP WEEK**

Morning Star Bible Camp (BC) plans, Lord willing, to host its second annual Titus School—a week of classes for training and equipping God's people in a number of areas. Peter Daley (MT) will be the speaker. Singles and families are welcome.

Early registration is highly advisable. If there aren't sufficient numbers by July 1, the classes will be cancelled. For fee information, call:  
Sharon Stutters, Registrar  
(250) 768-4651

For all other information, contact:  
Craig Funston  
(604) 588-3733  
hearthbrook@CharacterLink.net

**YOUNG ADULT'S CAMP**

This expanded College and Career weekend is scheduled for Morning Star Bible Camp (BC) to run from Friday evening, August 28 to Sunday evening, August 30.

The goal of this camp is to help develop tomorrow's leaders, elders, and missionaries. George Taibert (BC) is once again the invited speaker. He plans to deliver seven messages from Romans 6-8. The camp is intended for serious Christians, although there will be plenty of time for fellowship and fun. Please direct questions to:

Craig Funston  
(604) 588-3733  
hearthbrook@CharacterLink.net

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**

Story Book Lodge (Gilbert, MN) has a schedule of camps for young people of various ages running from May 1 through August 22. Included are three camps designed for the entire family on the following weeks: June 28-July 4; Aug. 2-8; and Aug. 9-15. Teen Challenge, a discipleship camp for growing Christians between the ages of 14 and 29 is planned for Aug. 16-22.

No fee is required for any of the camps. The staff at Story Book Lodge trusts the Lord for provision for all that is needed to maintain and operate the camps. Donations are accepted. For summer camps info:

William Howell, Director  
(218) 865-6241 or  
(218) 865-4379  
For family camp info:  
Roxanne Rodgers  
(218) 865-6663  
larryrod@rangenet.com

**BACK IN THE SADDLE**

Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp (MO) is gearing up for its 26th camping season. They are in the process of building a new recreation facility and have also purchased 40 acres of land adjacent to the camp property.

Nine summer camps for young people of all ages are planned beginning June 3 and running until the end of July. In addition, family camps and special weekends will be held May 22-25; July 25-31; Aug. 1-7; Sept. 4-7 and Oct. 9-11. For more information or for registration forms:

Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp  
(573) 744-5843

**PUPPETS NEEDED**

The Southern Gospel Team, based in South Florida, has been borrowing puppets for some of their outreaches and would like to acquire some of their own. If anyone has puppets in good condition that they are willing to sell for a reasonable amount or donate, contact Calvin Fritchey at

(954) 432-8787  
mcfritcheyfamily@juno.com

**LOOKING FOR FELLOWSHIP**

A small number of families would like to see a new fellowship started in the Orange Park area in Florida. If interested, please contact:

Andy Hamilton  
(904) 269-0042  
achfl2@juno.com

**FAIR DINKUM**

*Fair Dinkum* is Aussie slang which means "genuine, authentic, real, truth, etc." It's also a challenging new publication with a reader's digest of encouraging Christian reading and news. For a free subscription, write:

Andrew Craig  
19 Washington Dr.  
Craigmore 5114  
South Australia  
You can visit the web page at  
<http://iweb.net.au/~dinkum>

**CALL FOR HELP**

DIME (pronounced "dee-may") is a Spanish word which mean "tell me," the cry of millions who have not yet heard the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Two of the helpers at DIME Publishers have recently had to return to Argentina because their work permits expired and a third helper is moving on to a different ministry. As

a result, they are experiencing extreme difficulties getting their work out on time.

At the present time they are in need a person to work in the managerial or administrative capacity, perhaps a retired missionary or someone contemplating a change in the Lord's work. The person would require bi-lingual (Spanish/English) skills. *continued on page 14*

**UPWARD BOUND**

**What is Upward Bound? This is a two-week program that will be held this year from Sunday, Aug. 23 to Friday, Sep. 4, at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, ON) for a week of serious Bible study and fellowship.**

**Lord willing, Boyd Nicholson, Sr. (ON) will be speaking on the topic of Basic Doctrines for Christian Living, with an emphasis on prayer.**

**Frank Burgess (MO) will be doing an overview of Dispensations. Roy Houghton (ON) will also be a guest speaker.**

**If your schedule permits, plan to stay the second week, and take a canoe trip into the interior of Algonquin Park—a journey you'll never forget. We will continue some in-depth Bible studies as we work our way through the park.**

**Minimum age is 18. \$200 (CDN) is the cost for one week—\$350 for both. This covers meals and accommodation.**

**For info. or to register, call Saju Mathew at (519) 886-5187 or Sandy McEachern at (519) 638-2928.**

Inquiries may be addressed to:  
 Pedro Dillon  
 Phone: (408) 25309096  
 Fax: (408) 446-4455  
 dillondime@aol.com

**COMMENDATION**

The Christians of Quinte Bible Chapel (Belleville, ON) are pleased to commend to the Lord's work, Raymond and Kelly Marshall.

Raymond and Kelly have served as full-time workers for significant periods of time in Ireland and Ecuador. Raymond has developed his gifts in preaching and shepherding (plus other areas). Kelly has demonstrated her abilities in the areas of ladies' ministry and children's work.

Your prayers and fellowship with Raymond, Kelly and their children, Holly and Jessica are appreciated.

The assembly of believers gathering at Myrtle Beach, SC, and corporately known as Myrtle Beach Bible Chapel are hereby announcing their supplemental commendation of brother W. Alan Parks.

Alan and his family now live in the Myrtle Beach area and the saints there are happy to have him minister to them from time to time. This commendation is made in fellowship with the assembly at Silver Spring, MD, known as New Hampshire Ave. Gospel Chapel. This is the assembly which originally commended brother Parks to the work of the Lord.

The saints pray that as Alan continues to itinerate, the Lord will abundantly bless his ministry.

**AT HOME**

Alice Jane Pfaff of Waterloo, IA, was called into the presence of the Lord December 2, 1997. She was preceded in death by her husband, Karl Pfaff, with whom she had served the Lord for more than fifty years. She is survived by a daughter, two sons, and one great-grandson.

**PRACTICAL SUPPORT**

The Little Rock Outreach June 7-12 will be needing bag lunches each day. If you have access to food or drink donations that may be used for this, contact Caroline Cairns:

(616) 456-9166  
 caroline@uplook.org

**HOME FOR RENT**

Ranch style (3 BR, 2 bath) at Greenwood Hills Bible Conference, Fayetteville, PA. Mountain view. Great for missionary furlough or retirees. Enjoy conference fellowship (12-month or seasonal). Call Carl Balsam at (847) 869-4561.

**SINCERE APOLOGIES**

We are sorry for inadvertently printing the unedited transcript of Mr. Bill Yuille's seminar in the last *Uplook*, rather than his revised article. The correct one is on our web site: <http://www.uplook.org>

**You can help us keep FRONT LINES a current and usable source of assembly news by submitting your announcements at least three months prior to the event.**



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**INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY**

A new electronic Bible study system is available from Bible Companion Software, a ministry of Loizeaux. *The Inductive Bible Study Companion™*, developed with Precept Ministries, contains Bible texts, work study tools, an exhaustive on-line manual, and the first interactive workbook from Precept Ministries. It is fully extensible and additional databases and workbooks can be added any time.

The NASB is included along with several other word study tools. The most powerful aspect of the new product is the Markup Toolbar which allows the user to mark the Bible text with up to 16 colors and 128 symbols and then instantly transfer the results with the automatic Chart Builder.

The tutorial emphasizes using the electronic tools available and is helpful for all experience levels.

The first interactive workbook is included on the CD-ROM. It provides thirteen weeks of guided study, conveniently divided into five lessons per week. It also tells you when and how to use the Markup Toolbar. The workbook guides you on the creation of observation worksheets and allows you to enter your comments directly in the insights. It directs you to specific portions of the *Inductive Bible Study Companion™* tutorial for additional help should you need it, and it keeps your other study resources—including your personal commentary and word studies—just a mouse click away.

Available for US\$99 from *Uplook Ministries* (plus applicable taxes, shipping and handling fees). Call 1-800-952-2382.

[www.biblecompanion.org](http://www.biblecompanion.org)

# BUT IT WAS JUST A SEED!

*Be careful what you allow to grow in your soul.*

**T**he mysteries of the seed have always intrigued me. There, latent in a little bit of tissue, is the life of a great tree. Seeds that lie dormant for many years often keep this potential and, when planted, send down their roots and push a slender shoot up to drink in the sunlight. Soon what was hardly noticeable becomes something that is hard to ignore.

Alwyn H. Gentry, writing in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, tells us about the banyan, “a kind of fig tree that grows in India and adjacent countries. A single banyan tree has many trunks and can expand until it looks like a small forest.

“The tree grows in a peculiar way. Birds drop banyan seeds into the top branches of palms and other trees. The seeds sprout in the treetops and branches develop. Eventually, the branches send roots down into the ground. These supports then enlarge into trunks and develop new branches. In time, the banyan kills the supporting tree by strangling it.

“A fruit much like the edible fig grows on the banyan but it is not good to eat. The largest banyan tree known is on the island of Sri Lanka. It has 350 large trunks and over 3,000 small ones.

“The wood of the banyan tree is soft and porous. Its white, sticky latex is used to prepare birdlime, which hunters use in capturing birds. The banyan tree gets its name from the Hindu word *banian*, meaning trader.”

Here’s an interesting parable about the banyan with an important point to make. The following was used in a message by a converted Burmese to a group of his fellow countrymen:

A little banyan seed said to a palm tree, “I am weary of being tossed about by the wind; let me stay awhile among your leaves.”

“Of course,” said the palm tree, “stay as long as you would like.”

After a while he forgot the seed was there. But the seed was not idle. It sent out little fibers and tiny roots, which at first were hardly noticeable. But soon they crept around the trunk and under the bark itself. Then the tree cried out, “What is this?”

The banyan said, “It is only the little seed you allowed to rest among your leaves.”

“Leave me now,” said the palm. “You have grown too large and strong.”

“I cannot leave you; we have grown together. I would kill you if I tore myself away.”

The palm tree bowed and tried to shake the banyan off, but could not, and little by little the palm leaves withered, the trunk shrivelled, and only the banyan could be found. The lesson is obvious: Beware of little sins, of passing evil thoughts, of harbored grudges! Quickly uproot those “little” harmless things for they have the potential to ruin your life for God. No passing pleasure, idle thought, root of bitterness, or selfish habit is worth that much.



The banyan tree belongs to the mulberry family, *Moraceae*. It is classified as *Ficus bengalensis*.

# But God

## The two little words that make all the difference in the world

And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; **but God** meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Gen. 50:19-20

[Samson] was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of Thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst...? **But God** clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water out; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived. Jud. 15:18-19

And [Jahaziel] said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, **but God's**. 2 Chron. 20:15

Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. **But God** will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. Ps. 49:14-15

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: **but God** is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Ps. 73:25-26

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. **But God**

is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another. Ps. 75:6-7

The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: **but God** shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. Isa. 17:13

And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. **But God** prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. Jonah 4:6-7

I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. **But God** said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Lk. 12:19-20

And [Jesus] said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; **but God** knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Lk. 16:15

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. **But God** raised Him from the dead. Acts 13:29-30

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would



# But God

## The two little words that make all the difference in the world

even dare to die. **But God** commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:7-8

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey...? **But God** be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Rom. 6:16-17

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: **but God** hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. 1 Cor. 1:26-27

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. **But God** hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. 2:9-10

I have planted, Apollos watered; **but God** gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; **but God** that giveth the increase. 1 Cor. 3:6-7

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God** is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. 10:13

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: **but God** gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal. 3:17-18

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. **But God** forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Gal. 6:13-14

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **But God**, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:3-6

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, **but God**, which trieth our hearts. 1 Thess. 2:4

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, **but God**, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit. 1 Thess. 4:7-8



# CAN THE LORD USE...ME?

*You can't be too little for God to use, but you can be too big.*

## SERVICE FOR HIM

*I asked the Lord to let me do  
Some mighty work for Him;  
To fight amidst His battle hosts,  
Then sing the victor's hymn;  
I longed my ardent love to show  
But Jesus would not have it so.*

*He placed me in a quiet home,  
Whose life was calm and still,  
And gave me little things to do  
My daily round to fill;  
I could not think it good to be  
Just put aside so silently.*

*Small duties gathered 'round my way;  
They seemed of earth alone.  
I, who had longed for conquest bright  
To lay before His throne,  
Had common things to do and bear,  
To watch and strive with daily care.*

*So as I thought my prayer unheard,  
And asked the Lord once more  
That He would give me work for Him,  
And open wide the door—  
Forgetting that my Master knew  
Just what was best for me to do.*

*Then quietly the answer came—  
"My child, I hear thy cry;  
Think not that mighty deeds alone  
Will bring the victory;  
The battle has been planned by Me,  
Let daily life thy conquests see.*

**In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. Lk. 10:21**

**And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**  
2 Corinthians 12:9

*No service in itself is small;  
None great, though earth it fill;  
But that is small that seeks its own  
And great that seeks God's will.  
Then hold my hand, most gracious God,  
Guide all my goings still;  
And let it be my life's one aim,  
To know and do Thy will.*

## ONLY...

It was only a blossom,  
Just a merest bit of bloom,  
But it brought a glimpse of summer  
To the little darkened room.

It was only a glad "good morning,"  
As she passed along the way;  
But it spread the morning's glory  
Over the livelong day.

Only a song, but the music  
Though simply pure and sweet,  
Brought back to better pathways  
The reckless roving feet.

Only in our blind wisdom  
How dare we say at all?  
Since the ages alone can tell us  
Which is the great or small.

## SOMETHING YOU CAN DO

*If you cannot cross the ocean  
And the heathen lands explore,  
You can find the heathen nearer,  
You can help them at your door;  
If you cannot give your thousands  
You can give your widow's mite;  
And the least you give for Jesus  
Will be precious in His sight.*

*If you cannot speak like angels,  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say He died for all.  
If you cannot rouse the wicked  
With the Judgment's dread alarms,  
You can lead the little children  
To the Saviour's waiting arms.*

*Let none hear you idly saying  
"There is nothing I can do,"  
While the sons of men are dying,  
And the Master calls for you.  
Take the task He gives you gladly,  
Let His work your pleasure be;  
Answer quickly when He calleth,  
"Here am I, send me, send me."*

*That best portion of a good man's life—  
his little, nameless, unremembered acts of  
kindness and of love.*

—William Wordsworth

# How BIG are the little things!

*Lessons from the lives of Elijah and Elisha how God uses the minutiae of life to teach us maximum truth*

MARK KOLCHIN

It has often been said, “Big things come in small packages.” The meaning of this familiar adage is quite clear—though something may be small in size, its importance may be far greater than we think.

Periodically, Christians need to be reminded of this important principle in their walk with the Lord. Repeatedly, the Scriptures emphasize how important “little things” are in the lives of God’s people—each example filled with meaning.

When Israel returned from their seventy-year captivity in Babylon, they needed to be reminded of the importance of “little things.” Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, work

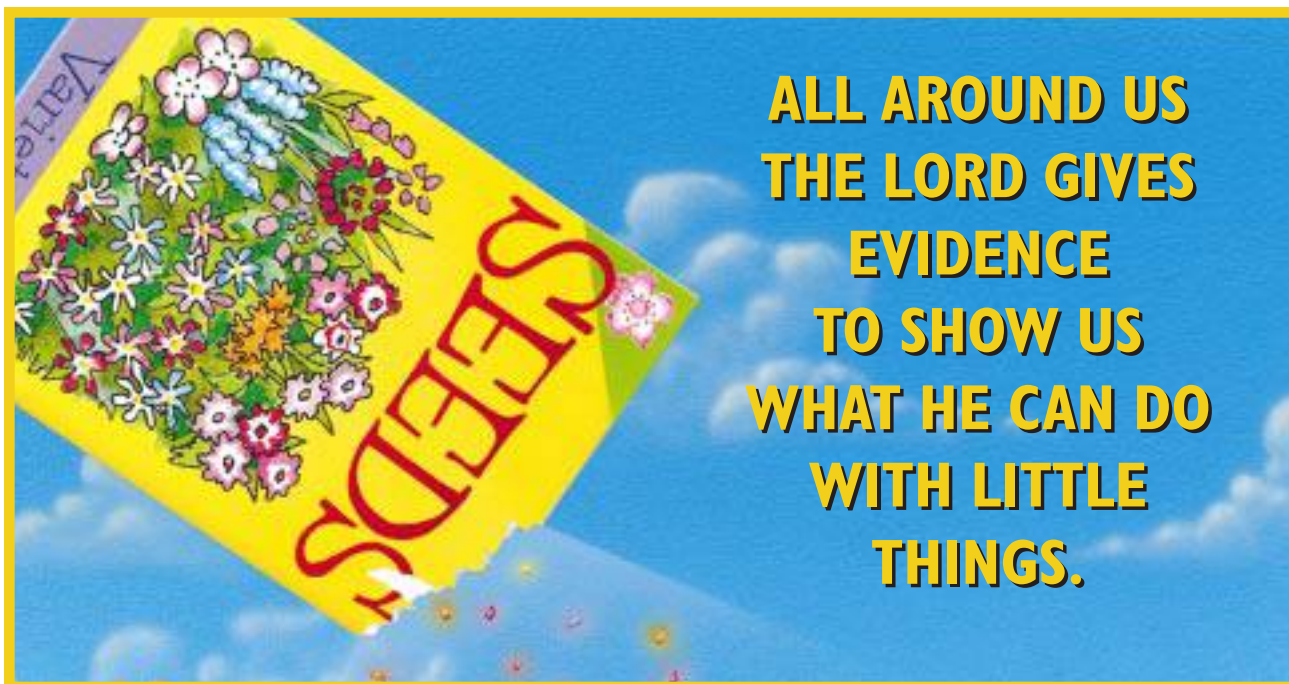
immediately commenced to restore the temple in Jerusalem which lay in ruins. When it was completed, it proved to be significantly less impressive than the one previously built by Solomon. God had to remind His people through Zechariah not to despise “the day of small things” (Zech. 4:10). Encouraging them, He declared: “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former” (Hag. 2:9). Though it was smaller, God promised that its glory would be greater.

It has been through this text that the hearts of many of God’s children have been greatly encouraged through the years, especially those who have wandered from the Lord. Like the Prodigal Son, they doubted if they would ever be welcomed back into their Father’s favor or be useful

to Him again. Discouraged and disheartened about their own unfaithfulness, they have felt that their testimony was forever ruined.

But as they pondered the implications of this verse, they found great encouragement and renewed hope. They came to realize—as did the apostle Peter—that the God of all grace can restore them to an even greater level of usefulness if they allow Him to do so. The lesson is powerful: God *can* renew a person’s hope, lift their spirits, and strengthen them in their service for the Lord. How big are the little things!

Elijah needed to learn the importance of “little things.” Standing before Ahab, he courageously spoke for God in a day of spiritual declension—and suffered the consequences. Led to Cherith, he had his



daily needs provided at the brook there; God miraculously fed him through ravens that brought him food both morning and evening.

When the brook dried up, Elijah had God's provision from another source. He was directed to the house of a destitute widow in Zarephath (1 Ki. 17:8-16).

Approaching her, Elijah requested a "little water" and a morsel of bread. Her response was telling: "As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die" (1 Ki 17:12, NKJV). The extent of her possessions consisted of a little flour, a little oil, a little pile of sticks, and very little reason to attend to his needs since she was convinced that she was about to die. On top of this, Elijah asked her to make a "little cake" for him first and then for herself, with the promise that her supply would not run dry.

The lessons from these "little things" are invaluable to the believer. First, for the servant of the Lord comes this forceful truth: God adequately provides for the needs of His workers as they are led by Him. Service done for Him according to His Word never lacks His supply.

Elijah learned this in private at Cherith, but now he was learning this principle in the public arena. God promises to provide for His servants, though at times it may be in the most unusual and unlikely ways.

In this instance, Elijah was on the receiving end. But there is also a lesson for those on the giving end, illustrated by the actions of the widow. Though she had few resources, God multiplied them to give her an increased ability to minister to Elijah. Her focus at first was on herself, yet when she put the Lord's things first, she also learned the same valuable lesson as Elijah, albeit from a different perspective.

We too, like the widow, may try to offer reasons why we do not have the time or resources to serve the Lord adequately or to attend to any matters but our own. Yet if we look beyond ourselves for the Lord's enabling, putting Him first, then our needs will be met and our efforts blessed! As the apostle Paul stated to the Corinthian assembly: "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Cor 9:10, NKJV). It was a principle that the Lord also wanted to inculcate in the minds of His disciples when He said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). This destitute widow learned that she was far "richer" than she thought as the Lord provided for Elijah and her household during the entire three-and-a-half years of famine.

There were other "little things" that surfaced in the ministry of Elijah—each one carrying weighty lessons for him—and us. After the showdown on Mt. Carmel and the execution of the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon, Elijah went up again to Carmel to pray for rain.

The Lord had already commanded Elijah to show himself to Ahab to say that He would send the rain (18:1). But amazingly, when he prayed no answer came! It took seven separate petitions for Elijah's request to be answered. When the answer did finally come, it appeared in the form of a "little cloud" as small as a "man's hand" (1 Ki. 18:44). It was the encouragement in prayer that he was looking for (and needed) after praying so long.

Put simply, prayer is work! Like Elijah, we must labor at it and not be discouraged when answers do not come immediately. At times, the Lord will respond quickly as He did with Elijah before the prophets of Baal. But here in the same place, the same person is under a different set of conditions. From this we learn that God deals differently at different times according to His purposes and for His glory. He is God! Never should we assume that He is obligated to answer our requests at our bidding according to our timetable. His delays, though long, are not necessarily His denials.

When the answer does come, it may not even catch our attention unless we are looking for it—just a "little cloud" as small as a "man's hand"—but nevertheless it is the encouragement and answer that we may need. Soon after Elijah spotted the cloud, the heavens opened up and the rains came down. So it is with prayer. Answers come quickly at times and more slowly at other times. The place and the people may be the same, but every situation is unique in itself. A "little cloud" may be all that is seen initially, but what an encouragement when it comes. How big are the "little things"!

There was still another "little" lesson that Elijah needed to learn in his ministry. Despite God's marvelous work in his life, this servant of the Lord was not without his deficiencies. After great spiritual victories, he lapsed in his faith, after he "saw" the fearful message of wicked Queen Jezebel who threatened his life. Cutting himself off from his servant, Elijah departed into the wilderness for a time of self-pity (1 Ki. 19).

Even though he was ministered to by an angel of the Lord, Elijah continued his aimless meandering for forty days and forty nights, arriving finally at Mt. Horeb (Sinai). There the Lord would teach him a "little" lesson in a "big" way. Instructed to go out to the entrance of the cave, Elijah strangely remained where he was (v. 11) as the Lord signaled His approach through a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire. But Scripture records that the Lord was not in them.

After the fire, however, a still small voice was heard—a little sound or gentle whisper indicating the presence of the Lord. With this, Elijah shamefully wrapped his face in his mantle and then went out to the entrance of the cave, pouring out his self-pity and complaint to the Lord. It was not until then that Elijah moved to the entrance of the cave. What object lesson was God teaching Elijah? His complaint focused on Israel's stubbornness to be moved by the powerful manifestations of God through His ministry. He groaned that he was the lone faithful witness in all of Israel.

But he was ignorant that 7,000 in Israel had also not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah erroneously assumed that great manifestations of God's power like the one shown on Carmel were sufficient to move the people to commitment. Yet like them, Elijah also failed to be moved when God powerfully signaled His approaching presence. It took the still, small voice to move him. It is always the quiet voice of conviction that God uses to move people to action. The powerful evidences are but a means to arrest the attention of the individual.

These are the ways of God. The very thing that Elijah

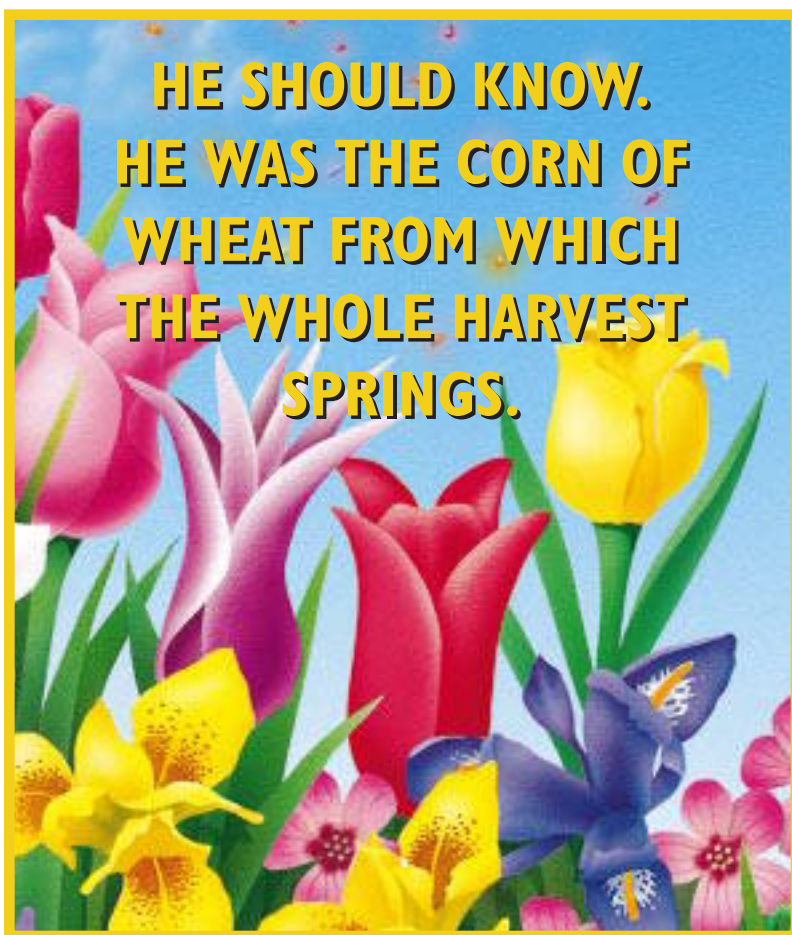
blamed the people for—indifference to God's indisputable overtures—he was guilty of also. Elijah acknowledged this when he covered his face as he went to the entrance of the cave. What a lesson for us in our service for the Lord! We may not always see the fruit of our labors among the unsaved or even in the lives of God's people, but we can be assured that He is quietly at work in some hearts to His glory. How big are the little things!

We also see the value of little things in the life of Elijah's protégé, Elisha. In 2 Kings 4:8-17, we read of a notable woman of Shunem who honored this venerable servant of the Lord by providing a "little chamber" in her home—a place where he could rest during his ministry travels. It served as a spiritual "get-away" where he could come aside from the demands of ministry in order to be refreshed and renewed. Simply furnished, it proved to be a continual blessing as he often passed through the area. As a result of her hospitality, this well-to-do but childless woman conceived and had a child within the year—a direct consequence of the assistance she gave to the Lord's worker and work.

What is the lesson? Hospitality, no matter how "little"

it may seem, is very big to those who need it, and brings unique blessings from the Lord to any who take advantage of the opportunity. Romans 12:13 reminds all believers to distribute "to the needs of the saints" and be "given to hospitality." When we do, we can be sure that a blessing awaits. Finally, in 2 Kings 5, we have yet another example of the importance of "little" things. When a "little" maid was taken captive by the Syrian army, it was her selfless testimony for the Lord that triggered the event that led to the healing of Naaman the Syrian. She could have remained silent and been resentful of her situation, but she was willing to share the words of life to her nation's enemy. It was a little word by a little maid that effected a great change in the life of the doomed commander. As we share the good news of Christ—the very Word of life—to those around us in a selfless, sincere, and unpretentious way, we too can effect a tremendous change in the lives of those who need to hear its life-giving message.

Not all the "little things" in the Bible are good things. But God can use these lessons to teach us great lessons through the "little" things in the Bible. How big are the little things!



# REMEMBER

*We often remember what we ought to forget—and vice versa.*

**T**he ability to remember is one factor that distinguishes from the animal world. The elderly (and not so elderly) tell us they can remember events of 30 years ago, but cannot remember where they put their glasses. We'll leave the explanation for the mechanics of our memories with the experts. But we do know God instructs us to remember certain things.

Sometimes we remember things on our own, things not worth remembering. The fact that something comes into our mind demanding our attention, does not necessarily mean it is worthy of that attention. Many things are better put out, so the mind is free to dwell on wholesome and profitable things.

The Bible is full of memory joggers. Here are a few:

1. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares* (Heb. 13:2). The stranger is someone who is not already part of us in our local fellowship. It is sad to hear reports from believers and unbelievers about how they visited an assembly and “no one spoke to me.” What about the visitors? Do we greet them? Do we show an interest? Would we invite them home or out for dinner? It is true, “churches” are a target for the lazy looking for handouts. But surely these are the exceptions, not the rule. The unbelieving stranger is usually shocked at genuine and warm friendship. It is sometimes the first witness to the gospel they hear. There are broken and bewildered believers who are searching for stability and truth in Christian fellowship and need to see it in action. Don't forget the stranger.


2. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body* (Heb. 13:3). The writer here is likely thinking about believers in prison for the sake of the gospel. Or perhaps more generally, those in any kind of adversity. We must remember them because they are not with us. Believers suffer all over the world because they are believers. Many face imprisonment or kidnapping. Do we remember to pray for them and their families? Or are they “out of sight, out of mind”? Many face other kinds of bonds: limitations, frustrating and confining circumstances. It may appear to have no direct connection to being a believer, but Job teaches us that the

enemy works in a variety of ways. Satan touched his money, and his family, and his body. We are all in the body. Don't forget those “that are in bonds.”

3. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation* (Heb. 13:7). I take this to refer to the elders. We might actually forget them, not because they are not there, but because they are always there, and seem to have always been there, and appear they always will be there. It isn't an easy job doing the work of an elder. It would not hurt us to encourage them. Praying for and speaking a word of encouragement lightens their load in a big way.

4. *Remember the widows* (1 Tim. 5:3). Paul urged Timothy to point out to the believers the importance of caring for widows. We can forget the widows because they are no longer seen in their family unit. Include widows in your life. Invite them to dinner, to a concert, for a Saturday afternoon drive. Include them in adult activities so they can enjoy conversation and fellowship with others. Think about them during holidays. The local church was not designed to be a social gathering for married couples with children. It includes believers in all kinds of situations. Widows may have financial difficulties, so remember them, Paul tells us. Widows can be great sources of comfort and consolation to others. Their life's experience provides great counsel. If we forget them, they may fade from us. Remember the widows.

5. *Remember all in the body* (1 Cor. 12:12). The Lord teaches us that the local assembly is a body. The human body is a good illustration—every part is necessary. We tend to favor the parts we can see. The parts of the body we do not see—the quiet ministries, the faithful brother or sister who is never heard in public, can appear to us to be less important. Yet no member can say he has no need of another member. (And, incidentally, no member can say I am not part of the body!) Stop and think about the non-public believers. They are spiritual, too. They can pray, too. They have a vital ministry. Remember them.

With all this remembering, we should clear our memory banks of unpleasant and unprofitable things. Then remember what you need to remember. 

by BRIAN GUNNING

# The secret of power

*Men have been looking in all the wrong places. Omnipotence was laid in a manger.*

**TOM WESTWOOD**

**T**he usual concept of power which enlightened men have held through the centuries is undergoing an enforced revision. Men have always looked for power in the prodigious, but many are learning today that it is not found there. Power resides rather in the small and insignificant.

The infinitesimal microbe has spread greater devastation than all man's arms in modern warfare. By simple hydraulic pressure, the power of droplets of water, men are lifting skyscrapers and moving mountains. The unmeasured might of the tiny atom has baffled man's imagination, and has wrought more destruction than a mountain of explosives.

This is really no new concept of greatness. It was set forth nearly twenty centuries ago. Paul, whom men regarded not as among the great of his age, but as of "the off-scouring of the earth," wrote: "*God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are*" (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

## NOT MANY MIGHTY

In the annals of human history, as recorded in Scripture, it has been demonstrated consistently that men of might, nobility, and human wis-

dom have played a lesser part on the stage of time. The primary actors have been those whom men have naturally discounted. God, who overrules in the affairs of men, informs us that this is His plan. "Ye see...that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).

In God's dealings with men through the ages, the Almighty constantly used those of humble mien to walk in the secret place of His power and overthrow the mighty of the earth. In the pages of Holy Writ we see this principle amply exemplified.

Noah's perseverance triumphed over the mockery of the worldly wise of his day. He outrode the storm that brought their destruction.

Joseph, a younger son in a large family, whose early footsteps were dogged by misfortune, envy, and hatred, rose in unassuming grace to sit on the throne of Egypt.

David, the shepherd, with a sling and stone overcame the swash-buckling Goliath, and went on to outwit the cruel and jealous Saul, who was head and shoulders above him.

Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, slow of speech and unobtrusive, became the greatest leader

of men of all time. He conducted a great host, in spite of rebellion and strife, across a desert for forty years.

Daniel, a young man of unassuming demeanor, a captive in a foreign land, quietly defied the tyrannous Gentile monarch Nebuchadnezzar, and was rewarded by being set at the king's right hand of honor.

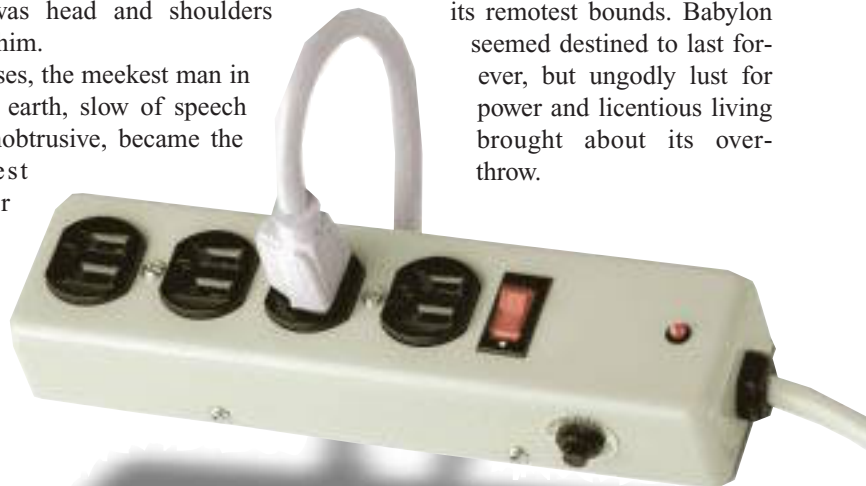
Paul, the apostle in the New Testament, who stood before his brethren in Corinth "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," evangelized Europe and has dominated the world as an exponent of Christian truth from that day onward.

It does seem evident from these personalities, who shone like stars in the firmament of the affairs of men, that the balance of power seems to be on the side of humility and kindness, quietness and grace, rather than the proud bearing or the might of arms.

## THE TIDE OF EMPIRE

As we scan world history, we realize that the tide of time has flowed onward like a turbulent stream. Conflict has raged more or less continuously. One emperor after another has lusted for world dominion.

Babylon had its brief years of universal dominion. Nebuchadnezzar's unbridled tyranny throughout the Gentile world spread terror to its remotest bounds. Babylon seemed destined to last forever, but ungodly lust for power and licentious living brought about its overthrow.



Media-Persia took over the reins of world dominion, but this was a divided empire from the start, and it soon vanished into oblivion.

Then the Grecian Empire rose under Alexander the Great, who stalked the earth as invincible. He conquered the known world, and died at thirty-three. Out of his own ranks arose antagonisms that divided his empire. It became vulnerable, and Rome took over.

The might of Rome seemed omnipotent, and the Caesars established what they called “the Eternal City of Rome,” the center of an empire that would hold undisputed sway in the earth, and have no end.

Just before the Lord Jesus was born, it seemed as if Rome held the unquestioned sovereignty of the world. Then in the little town of Bethlehem Judah a baby was born. It was such an event as would not at all merit first-page mention.

A virgin called Mary and her espoused husband Joseph sought a lodging place for themselves, but were elbowed out into the street by the busy throng of more important guests. There was no room for them in Bethlehem’s wayside inn, although they found haven in a stable, where the Child Jesus was born, and laid in a manger. Never was there an expression so eloquent of abject weakness and inconsequence as that little Baby lying in a manger in the forgotten town of Bethlehem. Yet it was Omnipotence in a manger.

Proud Rome would have disdained to imagine that any such event would have the slightest significance in the tide of empire in the world. Never had its proud universal sway seemed so undisputed, for unnumbered peoples had been crushed under the heel of Rome and lay prostrate at its feet. No standing army stood outside the citadel of their power, yet in that little manger in Bethlehem there was enshrined a power mightier than all the hosts of men of war from time immemorial. It was the might of lowliness, meekness, and grace.

The Child came to Manhood; it was soon evident He was Jesus the Lord. He had come to save His people from their sins—to set them free, not merely from Rome’s tyranny, but from Satan’s bondage. From the glory of the birth of the Christ-Child there has radiated throughout the world a new kind of power that Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, or the Caesars could never have understood—the power of meekness and gentleness.

In our day we have witnessed the greatest onslaught of armed might in the world’s history, culminating in victory according to man’s concept, yet the victors today are looking around for a power greater than armies to settle their unsolved international problems. They have found that the great victories have been actually great defeats.

Ministers of the gospel around the world are doing

more to solve the problems of mankind and bring order out of chaos than all the armor of the seas, land, and air.

### A NEW POWER AND A NEW KINGDOM


In Bethlehem’s manger we see omnipotence enshrined in weakness. There the eternal and limitless might of Jehovah made its unobtrusive entrance on the stage of time within the mysterious limitations of a tiny Baby—God incarnate. The power which was embodied in the Child Jesus at Bethlehem is a new kind of power which men do not understand. It was the same kind of power that was demonstrated in those men of God whose names we have mentioned. They were but shadows of the One who came at Bethlehem. They portrayed the power of the life which found in Him its Fountainhead—the power of divine love: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

This one golden verse has overcome more tyrants, quenched more cruelty, captivated more proud hearts than all the armed might of men. How? By the “meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). Many a stout heart which would not yield to tyranny has bowed in adoration before the One who was born in Bethlehem, died at Calvary, and now sits on the right hand of power.

### HIS KINGDOM

The once Babe of Bethlehem has Himself established a kingdom. His kingdom is far more powerful than was Rome at its zenith. It is “the kingdom of the Son of God’s love.” No marching armies carrying weapons of murderous destruction are maintained in this kingdom. No cannon roar is heard on the battlements of its citadel. Its soldiers go forth armed with the simple story of redeeming love. The gospel of peace is heralded in melodious strain from the towers of its city of refuge.

Paul, the religious bigot whose proud heart was captivated by the tender mercy of his loving Lord, described the weapons used by this kingdom: “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:2-5).

Should this article come into the hands of any whose hearts have not yet been won by the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, may we invite you to come under the power of His love? “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). 



# David: the youngest

*What disqualifies you in the eyes of men*

*may be the very thing that makes you useable in the service of the Lord.*

CRAIG FUNSTON

**T**he prophet Samuel was undoubtedly confused. The Lord had instructed him to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king of Israel. Seven of them had come and gone, yet there was still no king. Had Jehovah made a mistake? Had Samuel misunderstood?

Samuel had even been fooled by his own presumptuousness. The first one, Eliab, looked like the right one. So confident of what he saw, Samuel proclaimed, "Surely [he is] the Lord's anointed!" (1 Sam. 16:6). The Lord was gracious with that rash word, and gave us a timeless principle: "The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (v. 7).

Confused, fooled, now Samuel was urgent. He had already made one mistake regarding Jesse's sons; he didn't want to make another. In fact, he wasn't even going to sit down until he found the right son. "Are there any more sons?" he asked. There had to be another one somewhere.

It was then that Jesse "recalled" that there was one more. His name was David, and he was the youngest. "Youngest" is a very significant word here. It means least, smallest, or littlest. It could even be a derisive term.

Unseen by man, he was seen by God. Though out of man's sight, he was not out of God's sight. Even Samuel, the man of God that he was, saw as man saw.

On the one hand, big things are impressive and obvious; they are easy

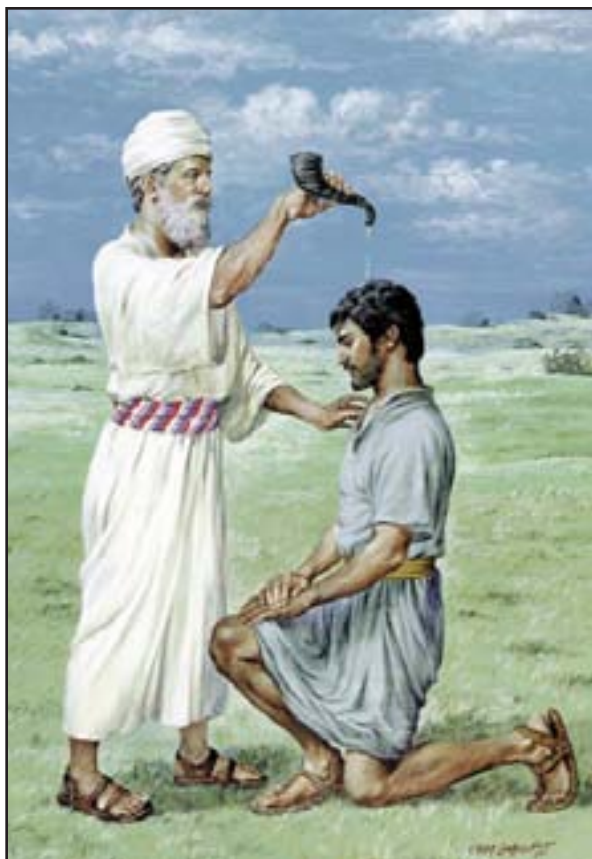
to be seen, heard, and felt. But is this the Lord's way? It would be instructive to see how God used so many small things in Scripture.

On the other hand, little things tend to be overlooked. They do not command the same attention as big things. David was quite likely not as impressive or obvious as his brothers.

Those who are not so conspicuous may be left out of our schemes. But the Lord's way is different. He regularly uses little things for His honor. It was the little lunch of loaves and fishes He used at Galilee and the little sling in David's battle with Goliath. It was the testimony of a little maid, the availability of a little jawbone, and the improbability of a little lamp and pitcher that God was able to use.


Gideon was useful to God because he felt he was the "least" in his father's house. Even Saul, so Samuel challenged, was better off when he was little in his own eyes.

The Lord also has a word of warning for us all: Watch out for the little foxes that will destroy the fruitfulness of our lives, and the little sleep that keeps us from reaping the harvest.



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Feeling a little, well, *little* these days? That's great! It is in your littleness, so-called, that God can exhibit His greatness. "God has chosen... things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

The little acts of kindness, gifts of support, or words of encouragement go a long way. These, and these especially, are the tools that God uses. Place your sense of smallness in the hand of your great God—and let Him use you for His glory. 

# Diminutives

*Little lambs; little sheep; little children; little daughter; little dogs; and little crumbs*

CHRISTOPHER G. WILLIS

In our English language some of the tenderest, sweetest and most endearing, yet most elusive words are diminutives. *Webster's Dictionary* tells us that 'Charley' is the diminutive of 'Charles.' Her Majesty the Queen might call Prince Charles, 'Charley,' but we may not do so: it is too intimate, too endearing a name, for a stranger to use.

Nor is it only to children that we use diminutives. I had an uncle by name of Charles, and he was 'Uncle Charley' to his nieces and nephews as long as he lived. So a diminutive may lose the sense of size, by being overpowered by the sense of endearment.

Yet not all diminutives have the sense of endearment, though many have. 'Rivulet' is the diminutive of 'river,' and has no other sense than the smallness of its size. 'Bairnie' is

the diminutive of 'bairn' and really means 'a little bairn;' but a Scottish mother may say to her children, even after they are grown: "My bairnie!" They will understand that she does not refer to size, but affection.

We have various ways of forming diminutives in English: rivulet, bairnie, lambkin, and so forth. In Greek we also find diminutives, but they are formed by adding the letter 'i.' Thus, *teknon*, a child, becomes *teknion* in its diminutive.

We do not very often use diminutives in English; in a sense they are almost too sacred to be dragged into ordinary usage, and are reserved for occasions of special stress or feeling.

The same, I think, is true in Greek. This makes them the more precious when they are used. To me, one of the loveliest diminutives in the Greek New Testament is *teknion*. The Lord Himself is speaking when we first hear it in the New Testament.

It is on the same night in which He

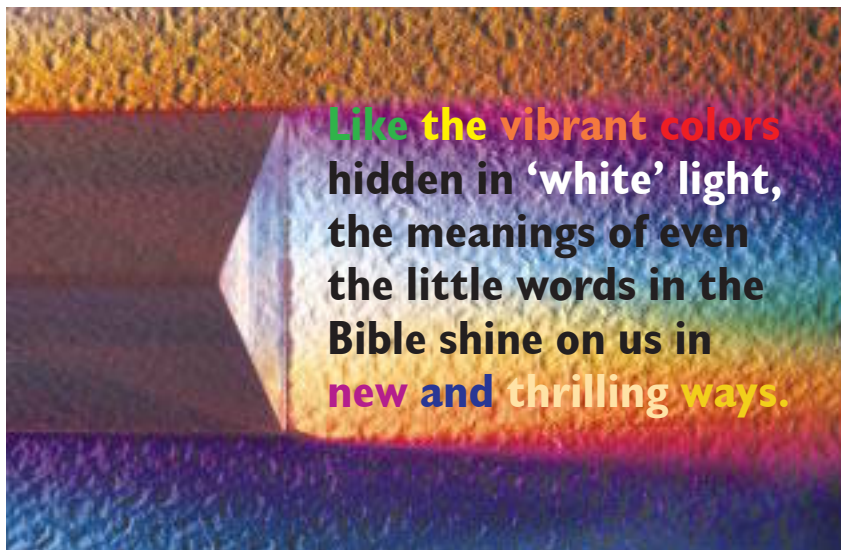
was betrayed; and He exclaims, "Teknia!" (the plural of *teknion*), "Teknia, Yet a little while I am with you!" That parting was before His soul, and well He knew what it would mean to His disciples. So, with a heart full of love, He exclaims: "Teknia!" I do not know how it can be translated. Our AV has, "Little children!" Darby has, "Children." Rotherham has, "Dear children."

All, in a sense, are right; but none seem to me to even begin to translate what was in the Lord's heart, and what He expressed to His disciples that night, by that one little word.

One dictionary suggests that the best translation of *teknon* is the Scottish word 'bairn.' Both come from a word meaning 'to be born.'

When the mother says 'Bairnies!' she knows they are her own born children. She sees them as still needing her tender loving care; she pours out the love of her heart through this word in a way, perhaps, no other word could convey. It does not mean they are good children; it is a word that may be wrung from a broken heart, because of the naughtiness and selfwill of the children. But above all else, it tells of the mother-love, and that must flow over in some way. So it was that night when we meet this word for the first time in the New Testament.

The next time we meet it is in Galatians 4:19, but the reading here is not certain. It may be *teknia mou*—'My bairnies' or it may be *tekna mou*—'My bairns.' I confess I hope *teknia* is right. Paul had to write more severely to the Galatians than to any other of his children in the faith, and there in the midst of his stern reproofs, (if the reading is correct), we hear him exclaim: "My Bairnies!" This is the only time we find this word in Paul's epistles; and




he used it to the naughtiest children of all: used it, I doubt not, out of much affliction and anguish of heart, and many tears. It seems to be one of the most touching spots in all that great Apostle's writings.

But diminutives are generally meant for the heart, not the head, and they are not meant to be explained, but to be understood by that wondrous intuition, that (in the things of God) the Spirit alone can give.

We find this word again in the 1 John, seven times. This need not surprise us, for the Disciple that Jesus Loved, naturally loved to use the one word uttered just once by His Lord, (as far as we know), that told, as perhaps none other of his Lord's words, the tender, yearning love of His heart for His own—and at such a time! These are the only times we find this word in the New Testament.

### BREAKFAST ON THE BEACH

 If you turn to John 21:5-17, you will find the Lord using three more diminutives. You know the lovely story of that breakfast on the beach, with the fire of coals that the Lord Himself had kindled.

You remember how He stood on the shore, and called to the disciples who were in the fishing boat, "Children, have ye any meat?" And they had to answer, "No!" In the Greek Testament the word the Lord used is not "Children," but the diminutive of children, *paidia* or, as we would say, "Little children." But was He thinking of their age or size?

I think that diminutive was called forth by the Lord's loving concern for their long, discouraging night of failure; and now no breakfast; for the very form of His question, as recorded in Greek, intimates that He knew the answer must be, "No!"

Then the same love that asks the question in that particular form, tells them what to do: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." The answering chord in the heart of the Disciple whom Jesus Loved tells him who that "Stranger" is standing on the beach, and he says to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

Then He invites them to the breakfast His own hands have prepared, and after they have finished eating, you remember he asks Peter if he loved Him more than the other disciples. Peter dare not use the strong word (*agapao*) for love, that the Lord had used, but replies, "Thou knowest that I am fond of Thee (*phileo*)." Then the Lord says, "Feed My *arnia*." *Arnia* is the diminutive of 'lambs.' I suppose the most literal would be, "Feed My lambkins." And I am not sure that it would be such a bad translation either.

Rotherham has 'dear lambs,' and I think that brings


out the thought intended. I doubt not that it was love, as well as size or age, that was in the Lord's heart. This is the only place we find this diminutive, except in the Book of Revelation, where we find it 27 times or more, used of the Lord Himself.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord then again asked Peter: "Lovest thou Me?" Peter replies as before, and the Lord says: "Shepherd My *probatia*." *Probatia* is the diminutive of 'sheep' and I think what Peter understood by the Lord's use of this word was just this: "Shepherd My dear sheep," or, "My beloved sheep." The size of the sheep has been forgotten in the dearness of it. How sweet to the soul are these words: "My beloved lambs," "My beloved sheep."

You and I are truly the Lord's beloved sheep and lambs; even though so often we are selfwilled and failing. And it may be the Lord has entrusted you with the care of some of His lambs or sheep. Perhaps you have a class of children that are lambs of His; it may be that sometimes they are noisy and trying and disobedient. Or it may be some readers know what it is to seek to shepherd some of the Lord's sheep, and you find them contrary and hard to get on with, and find them a sorry lot. It will help us if we remember the Lord calls them "My beloved lambs, My beloved sheep." That memory will help to make them dear to us also. And may we never look at them as our sheep, for the Lord calls them, "My dear sheep, My dear lambs."

Then came the Lord's third question, and He changes the word for 'lovest' from the word He had just used twice, to the word that Peter had used: the weaker word for love: "Simon, son of Jonas, are you fond of Me?" That is what cut Peter to the heart. It was not that He asked three times if he loved Him, but it hurt terribly to think that the Lord would change the word for "love" to the weaker word. And he bursts out, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I am fond of Thee." The Lord responds: "Feed My *probatia*:" "Feed My dear sheep." Those are the only times we find 'sheep' in the diminutive in the New Testament, as it is the only time we find 'lamb' in the diminutive, except in Revelation. But what a depth of meaning the Lord adds to His words, by just including that little 'i' three times.

### CRUMBS FOR THE DOGGIE

 Look at a lovely cluster of diminutives strung like four sparkling jewels in Mark 7:25-28. We find the story also in Matthew 15:21-28, and we have to ponder both Gospels to get the full beauty from

1. In Revelation 13:11, we find it is used of the beast imitating the Lamb.

this exquisite portion of Scripture. It is the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman. Mark tells us that her *thugatrimon* (diminutive of ‘daughter’) had an unclean spirit. Matthew adds she was “miserably possessed” (*kakos daimonizetai*) by a demon. Jairus had come to the Lord not so long before, using the same diminutive for his daughter (Mk. 5:23).

These are the only places in the New Testament that we find this word, and notice both are in Mark; for it was Mark, more than any other, who tells us the minute detail of some special word or look. How can we translate it? I do not know, for in English we have no diminutive for ‘daughter.’ The translators have done their best: “little daughter,” or “young daughter,” or “dear daughter,” but I am sure it does not tell half the story. Perhaps for Jairus the nearest we could get in colloquial English would be something like this: “My wee girlie is near her end!” Can you not hear the pleading love in his words: “My wee girlie.” She was twelve years old, but to the broken-hearted father she was still his ‘wee girlie,’—his *thugatrimon*—and she was dying. He dare not use the word for ‘death’ so he says, “she is near her end.”

The Syro-Phoenician woman uses the same word. The Lord had walked very far, some fifty miles, to reach that woman of Tyre and her ‘wee girlie,’ and doubtless, as on another occasion, He was weary with His journey. He kept wishing (imperfect) that nobody would know the house he had entered: but He could not be hid. This woman of Tyre, hearing of Him, came and kept crying (imperfect): “Pity me, Lord, Son of David!”

But He answered her not a word. The disciples did not like her constant crying, and they kept asking (imperfect) Him to send her away, because she keeps crying (present) after us. But He answered, “I have not been sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel’s house.”

She came as to the “Son of David,” which was His true title, but it was for the people of Israel, and as such she had no claim at all. So He replied: “Let the children first be filled.” The Lord used the word *tekna*, the ones who have the dignity and position by birth (not *teknia*, the diminutive), “for it is not right to take the children’s (same word) bread, and throw it to the wee doggies.”

The poor mother had been pleading for her ‘wee girlie,’ and the Lord takes up her term, and speaks of the ‘wee doggies’—the diminutive. Now notice, had the Lord used the ordinary word for dog, and not the diminutive—and this story is the only place in the New Testament where the diminutive of ‘dog’ is found—then this woman could not have replied as she did: for literally, as well as spiritually, in the East, ‘without are dogs.’

The fierce, horrible dogs of that land were not allowed in the houses, but the “wee doggies,” the cute little pup-

pies, could come in: and so the Lord gently and skillfully leads on her faith by giving her this unusual word to encourage her.

She takes it up instantly: “Yes, Lord, and the wee doggies under the table eat of the wee crumbs (another diminutive) of the wee children (another diminutive, but not the honorable word for ‘children,’ *teknia*, but *paidia*, one that could be used of a servant). She had watched her little girl eat, and knew how often she dropped crumbs.

In our house, the dog always sat under the chair of the littlest one, because it well knew most crumbs dropped there. And, says she, I’m not asking for a lot; only for a ‘wee crumb.’ Has Jairus’s wee girlie not dropped a wee crumb for a wee doggie over in Tyre? The children, the *tekna*, have been having a grand feast over in Judea; their sick healed, their lepers cleansed, the devils cast out of their children, even their dead raised to life: and is there not even a wee crumb for a poor wee doggie in Tyre?

What joy that conversation brought to the Saviour of the world! Why, (I doubt not), it was just on purpose to bring a wee crumb to this wee doggie—this wee girlie—that the Saviour had made that long, weary journey. And when she had got her wee crumb, He turns round and goes back again to ‘the children.’

Do you think that the Holy Spirit put those four little ‘i’s into that story by accident? I am sure He did not. Is that exquisite cluster of jewels nothing to you? Ah, beloved, talk not slightly of the Greek Testament; and discourage none from seeking to read the very words the Holy Spirit wrote. There are such treasures hidden there that none can ever exhaust them.

## THE LITTLE BOY’S LUNCH



One more example. In John 6:9, we find the word *Paidarion*, the diminutive of *pais*, ‘a child.’ It might be either a boy or a girl; but in John 6 there is later a pronoun in the masculine, so we know it was ‘a little boy.’ It was this ‘little child’ who provided the five barley loaves, and the two little fish, with which the Lord fed five thousand. This is the only place we find this word in the New Testament; but we find it twice in the Septuagint of Genesis 22. This is the chapter that tells of Abraham offering up Isaac. What Abraham seems to have said to the servants was something like this: “Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the dear child (or, little child) will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, “Lay not thine hand upon the dear child, neither do thou anything unto him.” May the tenderness, the pathos, of these passages fill our hearts; for diminutives are for the heart, not for the head.



# RELIGIOUS RITUAL

*It's on the rise in evangelical circles today*

**L**arge numbers of evangelical Christians are returning to the maze of religious ritual. Liturgical worship incorporating incense, candles, vestments, and ancient formal prayers has found its place on the platforms of evangelical churches. A recent study has reported that evangelicals are returning to ancient ritual at an alarming rate.

Ritualism is finding that leading Bible schools and denominations are fertile soil in which to germinate. Robert Webber, a professor of theology at Wheaton College, and a leading spokesman for ritualism, writes, "I had to find a faith that brought me into contact with the transcendence and mystery of God."<sup>1</sup> Church of the Nazarene minister Randall Davey has begun to incorporate elements of Anglican liturgy into church services in Kansas. On the west coast, four former workers with Campus Crusade for Christ have formed the Evangelical Orthodox Church, which uses Byzantine liturgy. President Peter Gillquist writes, "Our goal is to bring America to orthodoxy."<sup>2</sup>

Our concern is that ritualism is beginning to find inroads among the so-called "brethren." Assemblies have long been noted for their single-mindedness in worship, love for Christ and devotion to the Scriptures. Yet some assemblies are undermining the spirituality and richness of worship through subtle and overt forms of ritualism.

The Lord's Supper has been structured, reducing it to only a shadow of its true character. The foundation of reverence and holiness during the remembrance meeting is slowly being eroded. In its place we now find ancient prayers, priestly theatrics, chants. Sadly, one seeks in vain to find among all these forms the cultivation of a more worshipful and Christ-honoring people. As in nature, it is only a matter of time before the subtle seeds of ritual sprout into fully developed error.

A commended worker, who speaks throughout the US, has promoted this practice. He said, "To see people working in an organized, orchestrated, and beautifully planned-out way is beautiful...in liturgical churches when the procession would come in and the congregation would stand, and someone would enter carrying the Bible, and the music would play, and the trumpets would



blast, there was a glorious feeling in the air. This may not be your style, but it is God's style. This type of worship went on in the Old Testament."

For more than a century the "assembly movement" has studiously avoided ritualistic error. Formalism has been fiercely denounced from its pulpits. Early leaders of the movement exposed this lethal error for what it was, a contradiction of the true nature of New Testament worship. John Nelson Darby, a gifted and discerning leader among them, summarized their convictions when he wrote, "A worldly religion, which forms a system in

by DAVID DUNLAP

which the world can walk, in which the religious element is adapted to man on earth, is a denial of Christianity.”<sup>3</sup>

C. I. Scofield, Bible teacher and author, lays bare the fatal danger of this false worship when he writes, “The Judaizing of the church has done more to hinder her progress, pervert her mission, and destroy her spirituality than all other causes combined. Instead of pursuing her appointed path of separation from the world and following the Lord in her heavenly calling, she has used Jewish Scriptures to justify herself in lowering her purpose to the acquisition of wealth, the use of imposing ritual, the erection of magnificent churches, and the division of the equal brotherhood into ‘clergy’ and ‘laity’.”<sup>4</sup>

These solemn words should sound out a warning. The revival of ritualism represents strands of a cord which together strangle spiritual life. The dangers of formalism should be trumpeted far and wide within assemblies. Our liberty of expression, which is a great privilege in corporate worship, may prove to be the very gate for error. All too often, any expression of worship is permitted rather than spiritual expression in worship. Graciousness often wins out over the biblical mandate.

What is wrong, you may ask, with liturgical worship? Isn’t it just another approach to worship? What biblical principles does it violate?

First of all, ritual, by its very nature, creates an unbiblical class of believers within the assembly through its use of vestments, honorific titles, and special privileges. The Bible states in Job 32:21, “Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.” Again in Matthew 23:8, scripture says, “Be not called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and you are all brethren.” One of the most esteemed leaders of the early church was Paul, the apostle. What was his honored title within the church? The unassuming title which was used three times in the book of Acts (9:17; 21:20; 22:13), was simply “brother.”

Ritual creates unwarranted offices, distinctions, and titles within the body of Christ. Ritualism rejects the priesthood of all believers. This treasured truth of the church does not exalt one spiritual gift above another, but teaches that all spiritual gifts are to be valued and are indispensable. The unjustified religious practice of ordination for the priesthood and ministry in many churches undermines the priestly responsibilities of every believer.

Secondly, ritualism emphasizes form, beauty, and tradition above the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul warned the Colossians about the dangers of ritualism in worship (2:8). Paul explained in his first chapter what the focus of our worship must be: “He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-

eminence” (1:18). Formalism refuses to recognize the centrality of Christ in worship.

Since her very inception, the essence of the New Testament church has been to gather unto the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He is the sole “attraction;” all other activities and church “traditions,” new and old, pale in significance to the person of Christ. In the weekly remembrance meeting, believers do not come together to admire colorful vestments or listen to a recital of ancient prayers or to light candles. A believer’s desire is to glorify his risen Saviour. Worshipers who bring praise may be clothed in the latest fashion or in plain dress. They may gather together in a home, a newly erected auditorium or in a simple hall. This makes no difference to our Lord. That which does make a difference is for Christ to receive all the emphasis and priority in worship.

Thirdly, the Word of God thunders scathing denunciations against empty form in worship. Israel’s history teaches that the empty form remains long after the spiritual life has departed. For this very reason the discerning Christian must be cautious concerning unauthorized forms and structures in the New Testament church.

The prophet Isaiah rebukes Israel’s outward religion, writing, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me...your appointed feasts My soul hates, they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary of bearing them” (1:13-14). There is no more grievous act to the heart of God than that of empty worship and the meaningless repetitions of prayers and chants. God delights in the heart-felt songs and praises of His people.

Structure without spirituality, and formalism without reality, does not bring glory and pleasure to God. Many are seeking for something new, unique, and innovative to appeal to the emotions and senses of unredeemed man. Little forethought is given to what God requires or what may please His heart. The sad result of all this is that God’s Word becomes trivialized, and worship is robbed of its importance. The liturgical system, by its very nature, usurps the rightful place of Christ in the worshipping assembly. Therefore, all advances of ritualism, subtle or obvious, must be vigorously resisted.

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ENDNOTES:

1 Jeffrey L. Sheler, “From Evangelicalism to Orthodoxy,” *U.S. News and World Report*, January 15, 1989. pp. 58-59

2 *Ibid.*, p. 59

3 John Nelson Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. 5, Addison, IL: Bible Truth Publishers, p. 347

4 C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, N.Y., Loizeaux, Inc., 1892, p. 17



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God in flesh; a helpless baby  
Needing human ministry.  
Sweetest baby eyes beholding  
Things which might divine had planned,  
All-creating fingers, folded  
In a tender woman's hand.*

*Baby need of human loving  
From the human hearts He made;  
Of His glorious robe divested,  
Now in swaddling bands arrayed.  
Homeless Lord of earth and heaven,  
Angels waiting His behest;  
Yet a helpless child reposing,  
Cradled on a woman's breast.*

*Oh how oft she gazed upon Him,  
Trembling with the fear of loss:  
For upon His lowly cradle  
Fell the shadow of a Cross.  
Yet beyond the Cross a glory,  
Radiant, shadowless doth shine,  
Brought for me as well as Mary,  
Mary's risen Lord is mine! —ANNE CLARKE*

